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### New England StatNet: A Community of Practice in Performance Measurement

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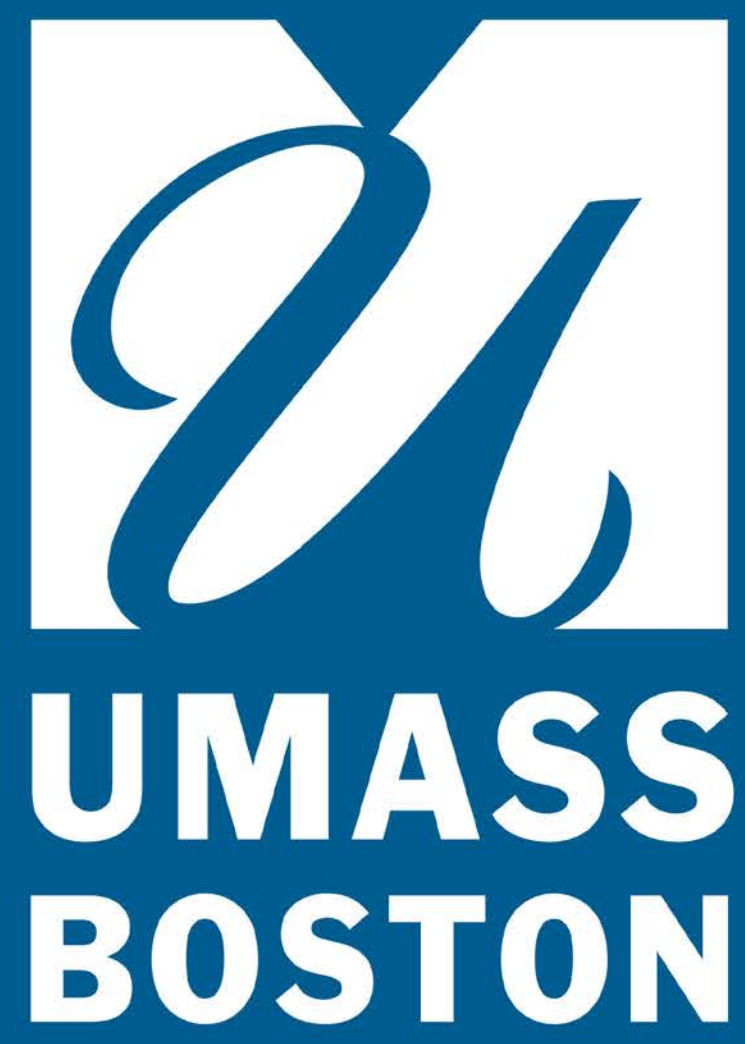
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# New England StatNet: A Community of Practice in Performance Measurement

Michael J. Ward, Director of Municipal Services, Collins Center for Public Management  
 Amy E. Smith, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Policy and Public Affairs  
 Municipal governments from across New England

## Goals, Objectives, and Setting

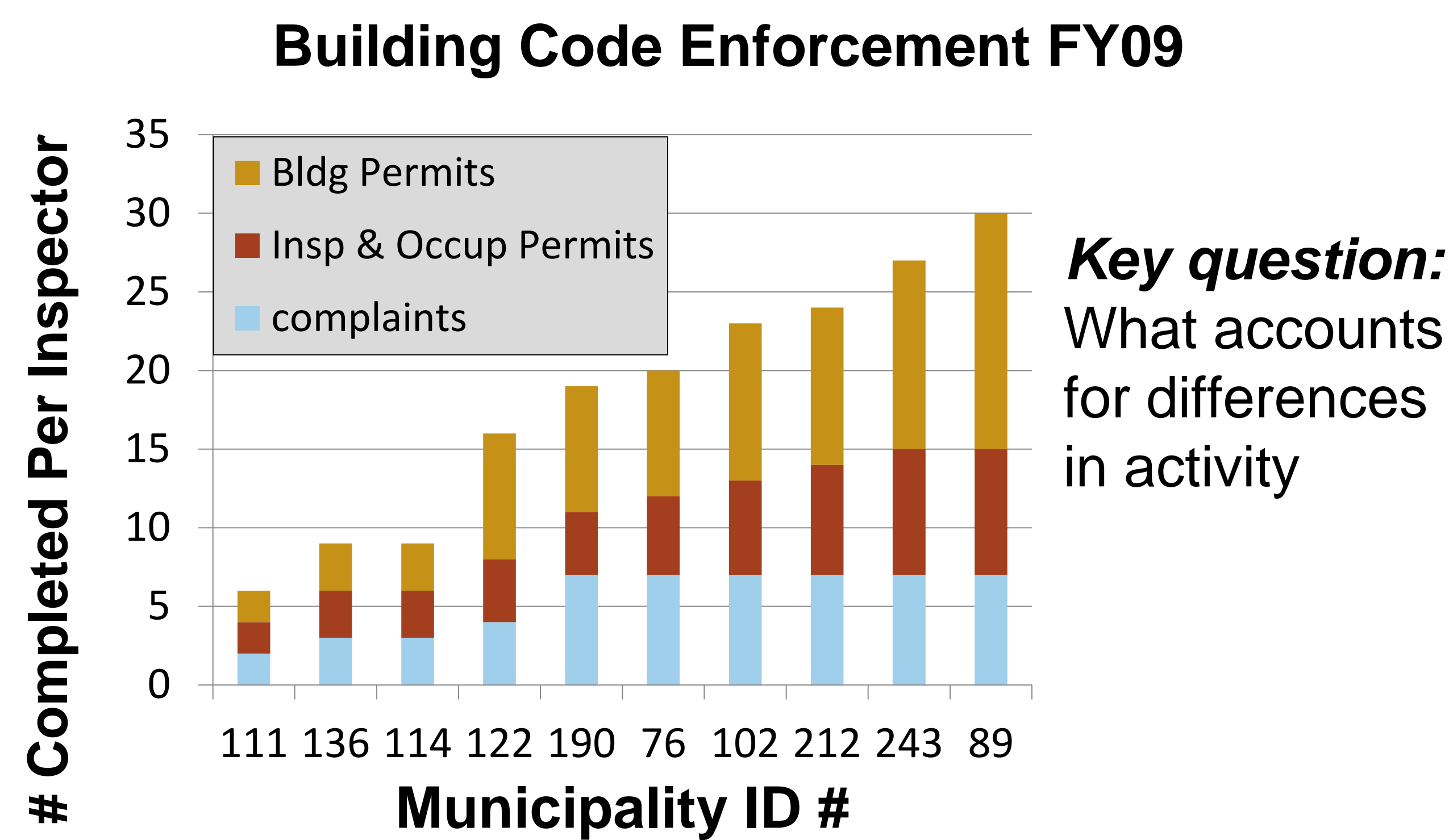
One way public organizations improve services is through the implementation of performance measurement programs. To help public managers address the challenges of performance measurement, knowing how others are using data in decision-making is valuable. Communities of practice are one way for public managers to access such information.

**StatNet began in 2008 as a network of municipal officials using data-driven performance management approaches. The group gathers three times per year for in-depth discussion of municipal governance, focusing on topics such as police, fire, budgets, constituent relations and DPWs. The group focuses broadly on:**

- **Methods for using data to improve government services**
- **Comparing performance measures, goals and targets, and service delivery techniques across municipalities**
- **Identifying best practices for performance improvement**

## Approaches and Methods

Participants fill out a data survey before each StatNet meeting. StatNet staff analyze and present responses using graphs and tables to start off the group discussion. The presentation helps participants understand what data different communities are tracking, how they use the data, and what the data indicates about best practices.



## Impact and Future Work

StatNet as a community of practice provides practical knowledge and opportunity for scholarly research.

- **A gateway to channels of communication within and across municipalities and groups**
- **Strategies for implementing performance measurement from a diverse set of perspectives**
- **Support for peer comparisons and best practices**
- **Data on how communities of practice aid public managers in addressing challenges**
- **Opportunities for hands-on learning and careers in municipal government for students**

## Participants

Amesbury, MA	Halifax, MA	Northborough, MA
Amherst, MA	Hartford, CT	Northbridge, MA
Andover, MA	Holliston, MA	Norwell, MA
Arlington, MA	Holyoke, MA	Orange, MA
Ashland, MA	Hopkinton, MA	Portland, ME
Barnstable, MA	Hudson, NH	Portsmouth, NH
Bedford, NH	Ipswich, MA	Providence, RI
Belmont, MA	Lawrence, MA	Reading, MA
Boston, MA	Lenox, MA	Revere, MA
Boxborough, MA	Lexington, MA	Salem, MA
Braintree, MA	Lowell, MA	Shirley, MA
Bridgeport, CT	Lunenburg, MA	Shrewsbury, MA
Brookline, MA	Malden, MA	Somerville, MA
Cambridge, MA	Mamaroneck, NY	Southbridge, MA
Charlton, MA	Maynard, MA	Spencer, MA
Chatham, MA	Medway, MA	Springfield, MA
Chicopee, MA	Middletown, MA	Sudbury, MA
Clinton, MA	Millbury, MA	West Boylston, MA
Dartmouth, MA	Nantucket, MA	Westfield, MA
Dedham, MA	Nashua, NH	Westford, MA
Deerfield, MA	Natick, MA	Wilbraham, MA
Fall River, MA	New Bedford, MA	Woburn, MA
Grafton, MA	Newton, MA	Worcester, MA
Great Barrington, MA	North Hempstead, NY	Wrentham, MA
Greenfield, MA	Northampton, MA	

## References and Resources

Wenger, E. C., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

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